

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A method of controlling a transaction between a receiver and a first content provider occurring over a network operated by a network operator, wherein said first content provider offers enhanced content programming relating to the transaction, the method comprising the steps of:

storing a receiver profile in a data base controlled by a third party, wherein said third party is coupled to said network;

intercepting a user request for the enhanced content programming, said user request originating in the receiver and directed at the first content provider, wherein said intercepting step is performed by said third party;

determining if said user request for the enhanced content programming is authorized by said stored receiver profile; and

permitting the enhanced content programming to be provided to the receiver in response to the user request if the first content provider is authorized by said user profile, wherein said permitting step is performed by said third party[.];

preventing the enhanced content programming to be provided to the receiver in response to the user request if the first content provider is unauthorized by said user profile, wherein said preventing step is performed by said third party; and

providing alternative enhanced content programming from a second content provider that is authorized by said user profile if the first content provider is unauthorized, wherein said providing step is performed by said third party.

2. (canceled)

3. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

determining if said user request for the enhanced content programming is unauthorized by said stored receiver profile; and

permitting the enhanced content programming to be provided to the receiver in response to the user request if the first content provider is not unauthorized by said user profile, wherein said permitting step is performed by said third party.

4. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said receiver profile is comprised of multiple user profiles, wherein each user profile includes a user identifier, wherein said determining step is further comprised of the steps of:

requesting said user identifier from said receiver;

receiving said user identifier by said third party;

determining if said user profile associated with said received user identifier authorizes receipt of the enhanced content programming; and

permitting the enhanced content programming to be provided to the receiver in response to the user request only if said user profile associated with said received user identifier authorizes the enhanced content programming.

5. (original) A method of augmenting a network transaction between a user receiver and a content provider, the method comprising the steps of:

storing a user profile in a data base controlled by a third party;

receiving enhanced content programming from the content provider within the user receiver;

detecting a trigger within said enhanced content programming, said recognizing step performed by said third party;

intercepting a user request directed at the content provider by the user receiver, said intercepting step performed by said third party;

appending additional parameters to said user request;

directing said appended user request to the content provider;

intercepting a user request response directed at the user receiver by the content provider, wherein said user request response comprises at least a portion of the network transaction;

forwarding said user request response to the user receiver;

intercepting a user purchase request directed at the content provider by the user receiver, said intercepting step performed by said third party;

extracting user purchasing information from said user profile stored in said third party controlled data base; and

providing said extracted user purchasing information to said content provider by said third party.

6. (original) The method of claim 5, further comprising the steps of:
extracting transaction information from said intercepted user request response;
and

displaying at least a portion of said extracted transaction information on a display coupled to the user receiver.

7. (original) The method of claim 6, further comprising the step of displaying at least one advertisement simultaneously with said portion of said extracted transaction information.

8. (original) The method of claim 7, wherein said at least one advertisement includes linking information to a specific content provider.

9. (original) The method of claim 5, further comprising the steps of:
determining if said user request is authorized by said stored user profile;
and
directing said appended user request to the content provider if said user request is authorized by said user profile.

10. (original) The method of claim 5, wherein said step of intercepting said user request further comprises the steps of:
appending an address to a third party controller to said intercepted user request;
and

directing said intercepted user request to said third party controller,
wherein said third party controller performs said step of appending additional parameters to said user request.

11. (original) The method of claim 5, further comprising the step of appending a marker to said user request response by the content provider, wherein said third party uses said marker to intercept said user request response.

12. (original) The method of claim 5, wherein said user profile is comprised of information selected from the group consisting of shipping information and billing information.

13. (original) The method of claim 5, wherein said user profile is comprised of a user budget, wherein said method further comprises the steps of:

extracting said user budget from said user profile stored in said third party controlled data base;

determining if said user budget permits said user purchase request; and

providing said extracted user purchasing information to the content provider only if permitted by said user budget.

14. (original) The method of claim 5, further comprising the step of determining if the content provider is authorized by a network operator to provide enhanced content programming to the user receiver.

15. (original) The method of claim 14, wherein said determining step is performed prior to said first intercepting step.

16. (original) The method of claim 14, wherein said determining step is performed prior to forwarding said user request response to the user receiver.

17. (original) The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of terminating the network transaction between the user receiver and the content provider if the content provider is unauthorized.

18. (original) The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of forwarding said appended user request to a substitute content provider if the content provider is unauthorized.

19. (original) The method of claim 5, further comprising the steps of entering said user purchase request into said third party controlled data base.

20. (original) The method of claim 5, further comprising the steps of:
directing a request for updated information pertaining to said user request to the content provider, wherein said directing step is performed by said third party;
receiving said updated information from said content provider by said third party;
and
storing said updated information in said third party controlled data base.

21. (original) The method of claim 5, further comprising the step of obtaining supplemental information from the user receiver by said third party in order to complete said user purchase request.

22. (original) The method of claim 5, wherein said additional parameters appended to said intercepted user request is comprised of a set of user receiver capabilities.

23. (original) The method of claim 5, wherein said additional parameters appended to said intercepted user request is comprised of a network specification.

24. (original) The method of claim 5, wherein said additional parameters appended to said intercepted user request is comprised of a user receiver specification.

25. (original) The method of claim 5, wherein said additional parameters appended to said intercepted user request is comprised of network operator business rules.

26. (currently amended) A network-based system for supporting a user transaction, the system comprising:

a network;

a content provider coupled to said network, wherein said content provider supplies enhanced content programming relating to the user transaction;

a receiver coupled to said network, said receiver capable of receiving said enhanced content programming and interacting with said content provider via said network;

third party means for intercepting data relating to the user transaction flowing between said content provider and said receiver via said network; wherein said third party intercepting means detects triggers within said enhanced content programming;

third party means for directly obtaining supplemental information from said content provider relating to the financial transaction;

a data base coupled to said network and controlled by a third party, said data base storing a user profile associated with said receiver and at least a portion of said intercepted data and said supplemental information;

third party means for selecting a portion of said stored data and supplemental information to be displayed;

a display coupled to said receiver for displaying said selected portion of said stored data and supplemental information; and

third party means for finalizing the user transaction with said receiver and said content provider, wherein said third party means for finalizing the user transaction

further comprises third party means for providing at least a portion of said stored user profile to said content provider.

27. (canceled)

28. (original) The system of claim 26, wherein said receiver is selected from the group consisting of set-top boxes, telephones, PDAs, and computers.

29. (original) The system of claim 26, wherein said network is selected from the group consisting of cable, fiber optics, telephone lines, terrestrial broadcast systems, and satellite broadcast systems.

30. (original) The system of claim 26, further comprising:
third party means for determining a set of display capabilities for said receiver, wherein said set of display capabilities is contained within said user profile; and
third party means for formatting said selected portion of said stored data and said supplemental information to correspond to said set of display capabilities.

31. (original) The system of claim 26, wherein said displayed selected portion of said stored data and said supplemental information is a semi-transparent overlay.

32. (original) The system of claim 26, wherein said displayed selected portion of said stored data and said supplemental information utilizes only a portion of a screen corresponding to said display.

33. (original) The system of claim 26, wherein said third party intercepting means, said third party means for directly obtaining supplemental information, said third party selecting means, said third party finalizing means, and said third party means for providing said portion of said stored user profile to said content provider is a third party controller coupled to said content provider and to said receiver via said network.

34. (original) The system of claim 26, further comprising third party means for displaying at least one advertisement on said display, said at least one advertisement displayed simultaneously with said selected portion of said stored data and supplemental information.